Progressive Policy

OF

The Liberal Administration

POSTAL REFORMS
LABOUR LEGISLATION

Speech delivered by the Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, L.L.D. K.C., Postmaster General and Minister of Labour, at Aurora, 21st June. 1907.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is indeed a great privilege to be the guest of the York County Reformers. It is an honor, the value of which I cannot too highly appreciate. Let me say at once how gratifying it is, for one, who unfortunately, does not come in Ontario as often as he would like, to see such evidences of prosperity, which are everywhere so apparent.

Sir, I confess I am somewhat of a traveller. I have, on several occasions, crossed the Atlantic and visited the old countries of Europe. I have also been in some of the States of the neighboring commonwealth, but I must admit in all sincerity, that this section of Ontario is one of the fairest it has been my good fortune to see The scenery is captivating—but above all—signs of happiness and contentment permeate, so to speak, from every farm

Much as we owe to Divine Providence, one must realize, however, that the general policy of the Reform Government, which was entrusted with the affairs of this country in 1896, has added not a little to that happy state of things.

Whilst it is unnecessary for me to dwell at length upon the causes of this prosperity, yet it is but fair to remind you that the fiscal policy of the Liberal Administration has given the farming

58590

community of Canada, the good times which it is your happy lot to enjoy.

The preferential tariff of 1897 has enhanced the value of our agricultural products.

It has given to the Canadian farmers the market of Great Britain.

The wise and practical policy of my friend and colleague, the Hon. Mr. Fisher, has advertised to a degree unknown heretofore, the superior quality of our dairy produce.

The Canadian West, once *the great lone land*, is now being settled by a thriving population. The acreage of cultivation is increasing month by month—year by year. Our transportation system—active, aggressive, as it has been—is hardly keeping pace with the progress of the country. So much so, that by the time the new Transcontinental is open to traffic, another railway will probaly be required.

Canada, Sir, is in the van of progress. No country in the world has greater possibilities, and, if we are true to ourselves, if we only realize its vastness, its wealth, its immeasurable resources, this century, the 20th century, will be ours.

As a Reformer, I rejoice, and I take pride in the fact that under our chieftain, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada has achieved such a gigantic success during the last decade, becoming under his leadership by far the greatest of all the self-governing colonies in the British Empire.

The Reformers of Ontario had confidence in Sir Wilfrid Laurier long before he became Prime Minister. May I say that their confidence was not misplaced? No man, I believe, has been more faithful to his trust than Sir Wilfrid. A Liberal at heart, a student keen and wise, an orator whose ideals have proved an inspiration to many, but above all a statesman and a Canadian in the broadest sense of the word. Such are his titles to the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen.

Much has been said and written in some sections of this country to stir up prejudices against him. Let me say to you, coming as I do from the Province of Quebec, that no statesman has given more evidences of his earnest desire to harmonize the feeling of the two races, to cultivate a national sentiment, and to inculcate in the hearts and the minds of the people the love of British institutions.

The Reformers of Ontario may well be proud of the Prime Minister. The position, the commanding position, he now occupies in the eyes of the British world—more especially since the last Colonial Conference—is the reward of the confidence which, in the days of yore, you placed in him when he succeeded that distinguished Canadian, Mr. Edward Blake, as leader of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition.

Sir, do not be misled by appeals based upon false representations. The province from which Sir Wilfrid Laurier hails is loyal. Our forefathers came here more than three hundred years ago. Their sons have kept sacred the only inheritance which was bequeathed to them—a creed which teaches them the fear of God and respect for authority; a language full of the sweet memories of the past; a spirit of chivalry which, after all, is the best guarantee of their unflinching loyalty to the Crown.

Bear in mind, that the British institutions which happily govern us are, when applied in their true spirit, the only safeguard of the French-Canadians as a race. We cling to them, because we feel that under them, and with them, our rights, our franchises, our liberties are secured to us.

I might perhaps avoid making this statement before the intelligent electors of York, whose forefathers generously elected, more than fifty years ago, one of the most illustrious sons of Lower Canada, Sir Louis Hyppolite Lafontaine—but it is well at times to remember the last words of Kipling's Recessional—"Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

The historic County of York, I am pleased to say, has long remained faithful to the cause of Reform. The county which elected

William Lyon Mackenzie, Sir William Mulock, and my distinguished friend, the present Minister of Justice, the Hon. A. B. Aylesworth, is hallowed ground for Reformers. With unfaltering steps, you and your ancestors have steadily followed the Liberal banner.

I, for one, as a young Canadian, from the Province of Quebec, am proud to have been in the Dominion Government the successor of both Sir William Mulock and Mr. Aylesworth, as Postmaster General and Minister of Labor. May I also refer to the fact that one of the ablest officials of the Dominion Government is the Deputy Postmaster General, Dr. Coulter, a worthy son of Aurora.

I am, therefore, practically at home, when on an occasion like the present, I have to speak of the two Departments which it is my lot to administer.

THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

As regards the Post Office Department, I have only had to follow in the footsteps of Sir William Mulock to maintain its traditions. Let me give you a few facts and figures, which will enable you to grasp the enormous strides we have made from a Postal standpoint during the last ten years.

Throughout the whole system of the Post Office Department it would be possible to point out where regulations have been corrected, systems have been extended, rates have been reduced, additional services have been given in the interest of the people, but time will not permit of such extensive review of the Postal Service of Canada. Whilst radical changes have been made and additional privileges given in the different branches of the service, the business methods and economy of the administration have been maintained.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

During the last ten years there has been an immense increase in the departmental organization. Between 1896 and 1907, the number of Post Offices was increased from ,9103 to 11,377, or 25 per cent. increase.

The number of miles of travel annually with the mails was increased from 30,552,683 to 42,841,437; an increase of 12,289,754 miles, or 40 per cent.

The number of Money Order and Postal Note offices was increased from 1,310 to 9,091, or an increase of 594 per cent.

The number of Savings Bank offices was increased from 755 to 1,043, or an increase of 38 per cent.

The number of letters carried in the mail, which in 1896 was 116,128,000, increased to 362,281,280, or an increase of 212 per cent.

During the last fiscal year, in order that you may see that since I have assumed charge of the Department we are keeping up the work and keeping the public interest well in sight, I may state that there have been 513 post offices authorized for establishment, the largest number authorized for establishment in one year in the history of the Department.

The mail service by railway has been increased by 327,145 miles.

The mail service by stage has been increased by 121,048 miles.

The mail service by steamboats has been increased by 254,354 miles making a total increase in the annual mileage in mail routes of 702,547 miles.

Four additional inspectorates for the west are at the present time being organized; three adidtional Railway Mail Service districts are also being organized for the western points; a new mail tender has been acquired for the purpose of performing a side service at Rimouski; and the letter carrier delivery system has been extended to all towns having a population of 12,000 and a revenue of $20,000 per year.

This will give letter carrier delivery system to the following towns: Guelph, Ont.; Peterborough, Ont.; Windsor, Ont., Stratford, Ont.; Sherbrooke, Que.; St. Hyacinth, Que.; Three Rivers Que.; Calgary, Alta.; Edmonton, Alta.

The Department has now a surplus for the nine months of over one million, and if the old financial year had existed until

first July, on the same proportion as for the nine months, the surplus would have been $1,443,069. I may say, that when the actual figures are available for the last three months they will show a greater figure than the estimate.

When you take into consideration that no branch of the public service in the Post Office Department has been starved, but that every branch of the Department has kept pace with the growth and development of the country to as great an extent, if not greater than ever before characterized the Department; when you take into consideration that the facilities for doing business have been very much extended; that the rates, both as regards the Money Order System and Postage, between Canada and the United States and between Canada and Great Britain and the domestic rates of Canada have been reduced; that the postage rates between Canada and Great Britain and her colonies have been reduced from five cents per half ounce to two cents per half ounce, and the rate between Canada and the United States has been reduced from three cents to two cents; that the salaries of both postmasters and officials have been materially increased during that time, the public of Canada must admit that the Post Office Department has been conducted in a wise and business-like manner.

THE INTELLECTUAL PREFERENCE.

May I now refer to another great reform, with which the Post Office Department has been associated of late. But, before doing so, let me state briefly the reasons which led me to take steps a few months ago to abrogate the convention with the United States, as regards second class matter.

As you are aware, the Post Office Department is carrying legitimate newspaper and periodical matter at a very great deal below the cost of transportation. So long as this country was not growing, and the publishing business was not developed it was good policy to do so, but, in the last three or four years, in view of the rapid development of Canada, and of its publishing business together with the very great expansion of the United States publishing business

over and above what it had been in the past, and in view of the large migration of American people to the western portion of Canada, it simply became impossible to handle the additional matter which was being presented. Thousands of tons of American publications which would not be admitted as such in Canada under any circumstances, which were practically advertising matter, were being rushed through from the United States into our country, choking our mail cars and post offices.

Constant complaint was being received from our own publishers that privileges were being granted to United States papers that were denied to our own people, and owing to the difference in rates and classification between Washington and Ottawa, this was practically true. I was, therefore, confronted with a condition of affairs which demanded prompt action.

It was hopeless to expect to induce the United States to raise their rates and change their classification; they had already appointed a commission to investigate and report on the matter. This commission had met and made its investigation and reported to Congress recommending certain changes. Although Congress met and prorogued, no action was taken beyond appointing another commission. Under such circumstances, I felt compelled to act. Six months' notice was given to publishers both in Canada and the United States and early this spring I proceeded to Washington and negotiated a new convention.

What is the effect of this new convention? As I have already stated, it affects only second class matter. In the future, the rates, instead of being *one cent per pound from the United States to Canada and a half a cent per pound from* Canada *to the United States, have been raised to one cent per four ounces, or four cents per pound.*

I am well aware that some of our own papers having subscribers in the United States have been hit, as a result of this convention, but, bear in mind, that our domestic rates are by far the lowest in the world; that besides, the old convention was one-sided, Canada

carrying two hundred tons of American mail matter as against one carried by the United States.

And now, Sir, simultaneously with the change in our postal relations with the United States, it has been my good fortune to secure for Canada what I cannot help calling an *intellectual preference* from the Mother Country. Whilst, during a long period of years, our country was being swamped with American literature, and that, at a ridiculously low rate, the British newspapers and magazines were practically excluded from Canada, on account of the high rates existing.

On various occasions, representations had been made to the British postal authorities, but, without success. It so happened that the present Postmaster General of Great Britain, Mr. Sydney Buxton, was my personal friend. The first communications which we officially exchanged bore on this very question of British postal rates. I am pleased to say that Mr. Buxton has been able to grant Canada a very substantial reduction from eight cents to two cents a pound on newspapers and magazines.

I will be asked: What good will result? First, we are getting a very large British immigration—indeed much larger than Mr. Roblin thinks—and it will be far easier for these people to keep up a home connection; their favorite magazine and weeklies, perhaps, a few of their favorite dailies, will follow them. This will be pleasant for them, and it is part of our business to make things pleasant for the new-comers. They will keep better in touch with British conditions than hitherto has been possible, and so will form an element in our polity acquainted with our ideals. Next, Canadians who are not recent arrivals will read British periodicals to an appreciably greater extent; at the same moment American trash will receive a check, and British journals a stimulus; apart from the political results already noted, which will apply in this case also, there is the solid intellectual advantage of having opened to general Canadian use the finest periodical press in the English language.

THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

What I stated about the Post Office Department applies as well to the Labour Department.

Sir, I cannot refer to our past labor legislation without mentioning again the name of Sir William Mulock, your old representative, who has done so much for the workingmen of this country. Everyone will admit, now that Sir William Mulock is no more in the political arena, that he created the Department of Labour. In early life he had been himself a wage earner—he had learned from his personal experience what were the difficulties encountered by workingmen, and so, when he became later on in his career, a Privy Councillor, he gave us the benefit of his experience by organizing the Labour Department, and by securing for this country the very eminent services of Mr. Mackenzie King, the present Deputy Minister of the Department of Labour, who is the grandson of William Lyon Mackenzie. During the session of 1900, Sir William Mulock introduced the famous Conciliation Act.

CONCILIATION ACT.

The Conciliation Act was by many believed to be an ineffective piece of legislation. Strong objection was taken to some of its features. It was then claimed that it did not go far enough, and there were not a few who stated that a system of compulsory arbitration should be adopted in this country. Indeed, it was said that no tribunal as the one contemplated, which could not give an award binding upon the parties, could successfully settle a labor dispute.

New Zealand had, a few years before, adopted a policy of compulsory arbitration, and it was thought that we, also, should give that principle a test.

But, Sir, not many months, not many weeks elapsed, before it was made evident that both employers and employees were hostile to the principle of compulsory arbitration. Articles published in the press, resolutions adopted by the different labor organizations, by the Boards of Trade were unanimous in their condemnation of such a

principle. The concensus of opinion was, however, strongly in favor of compulsory investigation in labor disputes.

Sir William Mulock kept faith with the public and with parliament. During the session of 1903, he introduced the Railway Labour Disputes Bill, which has since become law. We all know that according to the provisions of that Act, a compulsory investigation can be ordered by the Minister of Labour. The effect of that law has been most satisfactory, because since its enactment, there has not been one strike or lockout of any magnitude or importance on any of our great railway systems. In every case where a difference or a dispute has taken place, the railway companies and their employees have found a way of settling their difficulties between themselves. The fear of public investigation is in such cases the beginning of wisdom.

COMPULSORY INVESTIGATION.

It is along those progressive lines, that I proceeded one step further during last session, when I introduced into parliament a bill which provides for a compulsory investigation before any strike or lockout can be declared, in all public utilities.

Briefly, what are the main features of that bill which has become law since?

(1) It enacts, under penalty, a prohibition of strikes and lockouts pending an investigation by a board specially appointed for that purpose.

(2) It provides the machinery devised to achieve this end.

(3) It is made applicable to certain industrial disputes.

The law provides in the case of disputes arising in certain industries, when the parties are unable to adjust, and before any strike or lockout has been declared, for an impartial tribunal, which has power to fully investigate all matters connected therewith.

(a) This tribunal assists the parties to effect a settlement, having full power to report upon and to make recommendations concerning the dispute.

(b) It is a means of giving to the public at large an intelligent opinion upon the respective rights and justice of the relative positions of the parties.

(c) It makes the parties subject to an enlightened public opinion —a public opinion fully informed as to the matter at issue—and that, before any strike or lockout has been declared.

This main feature of the bill was admittedly an advance on the lines of our own legislation.

It was a step forward, in so far as we have advanced beyond the legislation of some countries which, at present, stand ahead of others, industrially speaking. But, at the same time, we have avoided in that process of assimilation what experience has shown to be a weakness. All countries cannot, for many obvious reasons, adopt, especially on the labour question, identical laws. Conditions vary, circumstances differ.

OPERATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES INVESTIGATION ACT, 1907

The new law which received the Royal assent on March 22nd, has received numerous and severe tests during the three months following its enactment. As may easily be supposed, because of the vast area of Canada and the slender telegraphic and news facilities in many parts of the country where industries are nevertheless carried on actively, the features of the new measure were but little known for several weeks after the passage of the Act, and there was consequently misunderstanding concerning the effect and intent of the measure.

The first application under the Act came from Tabor, Alta.; the men here claimed they had been locked out without notice. The number affected was about three hundred. The existence of the Act brought about a conference between the employers and employees, and a settlement was effected within a few days.

A second application came from Springhill, N.S., on April 8th. The management of the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company

claimed the men had gone on strike without notice. Seventeen hundred men were said to be affected. It appears the men in going on strike had supposed the new measure did not relate to Nova Scotia. On the Act being explained to them, and it being made manifest that the Act applied to every province in Canada, the men returned to work. The General Manager of the mines at Springhill expressed his view of the Act in the following telegram to the Minister of Labor:

> "This is the best yet, and, if rightly enforced, will safeguard the mining and industrial interest of Canada."

A third application came from the employers comprising the Western Coal Operators' Association. Here also, through a misunderstanding of the Act, many of the men had ceased work. Probably not less than three thousand men in all were affected. A Board was appointed under the Act and a settlement effected within a couple of weeks, averting a tremendous calamity from Western Canada.

A fourth application came from the machinists in the employ of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada on April 20th. In this instance the Act achieved a most signal victory. A dispute of the most difficult nature was disposed of with singular rapidity and to the entire satisfaction of both parties. Five hundred men were affected and practically every aspect of the labor problem figured in the points of the dispute.

A fifth application under the Act came from workmen in the employ of the Cumberland Railway & Coal Company of Springhill. The company in question is the same as that which itself had invoked the Act shortly after its enactment. The Act was now invoked by the men with regard to a different dispute. Seventeen hundred men were involved. A Board was appointed and heard evidence. The workmen in the meantime proceeded regularly with their industry. The report of the Board has not yet been made, but there can be little doubt that the proceedings will continue to be as harmonious as they have been up to date.

The sixth application under the Act came on May 15th from the Shipping Federation of Canada representing the ship owners

of Montreal. The longshoremen of that port had gone on strike for increased wages. After a cessation of work for one week the men took the advice of the Department of Labour and returned to work. The Shipping Federation having withdrawn its application for a Board, the men themselves put in a new application. A Board was appointed. It has just filed its report with recommendation which, if accepted, will prevent any dispute in that port for the present season and possibly not for some years. The men concerned numbered sixteen hundred.

The eighth application came from the employees of the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company at Lethbridge, Alta. This company had not been included in the agreement made between the Western Coal Operators' Association and their employees. The Minister was in the act of establishing a Board when the following telegram was received by the Deputy Minister of Labour:

"Lethbridge, Alta., June 5th, 1907.

"Agreement signed to-day with Alberta Railway & Irrigation Company. No need of Board now, thanks to the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act. Congratulations."

(Sgd.) "F. H. Sherman, President District No. 18.
U.M.W. of A."

In this last case, although the Board was not actually established, the settlement of the dispute was due wholly to the influence of the new Act and the opportunity it affords of bringing the employer and employee face to face. Mr. Sherman's telegram, coming as it does from a leader of the workmen of Western Canada, may well be placed beside that quoted above from the manager of the mines at Springhill, and shows how employer and employee unite in testimony to the efficacy of the Act. The number of men concerned was about five hundred.

The ninth application under the Act came from the Steamship Companies doing business in Halifax, N.S., where the longshoremen had gone on strike, not realizing the nature of the Act. Neither

side at the time of the dispute had been aware of the nature of the Act. The employers at once put in an application for a Board under the Act, but before the Board could be established a settlement had been effected. The number of men concerned was about one thousand.

A further instance of the direct influence of the Act, although no application reached the Government in connection therewith, comes from Van Anda on Texada Island, B.C. Here the men had ceased work and were being prosecuted under the penal clauses of the Act. The magistrate wisely afforded the disputing parties an opportunity of settlement and a settlement was quickly effected. Undoubtedly, however, the Act was responsible for the settlement in question.

Finally word has recently reached the Department that the longshoremen at Port Arthur, after being on strike for some days, returned to work with the understanding that, if their terms are not conceded by their employers, they will shortly apply for the appointment of a Board under the Act.

It would be difficult to conceive of happier results than those outlined during the short life of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act and directly attributable to its provisions.

I firmly believe, Sir, that this law is the greatest charter which both capital and labor ever received. It is another *bill of rights* which protects not only the employer and employee, but also takes into consideration that other third party which should never be lost sight of—*the public.*

Contrast labor conditions in Canada with those existing in the United States. Read the evidence of the Boise trial and ask yourselves if a policy of conciliation and compulsory investigation is not more liable to foster industrial peace than any other legislation.

OLD AGE ANNUITY.

This is, Sir, one of the many reforms accomplished by the Liberal Government. If I were not intruding on your time, I would also refer to that other issue which some day or other will have to

be settled by the Liberal party—*the old age annuity.* You have probably read the remarkable speech delivered during last session by Sir Richard Cartwright—that eloquent champion of reform. It is but the first notice given of a legislation which, at no distant date, will be enacted, in order to encourage economy and thrift, as well as provide the laboring classes against the adversities of life.

LIBERAL IDEALS.

The Liberal party in Canada will always devote its energies to the upholding of principles similar in kind to those which received the support of the great Liberal party in England.

We have inherited the ideals of the men who, in the early days, stood for freedom against bureaucracy. The history of Ontario Liberalism is one which can appeal to the younger generations. Yes, your ancestors boldly protested against *The Family Compact;* they demanded the entire control of the revenues of the country and the responsibility of the executive. Later on, they raised their voices for greater freedom of trade and for the extension of franchise. They obtained the secularization of the Clergy Reserves and wiped out all feudal vestiges from legislation. They advocated representation by population; they opposed any encroachment upon provincial rights—aye and as long as beats a true Canadian heart—the name of Oliver Mowat will be remembered.

Parliament, in the dying days of last session, voted an appropriation to erect, on the Hill, a monument to the memory of Lafontaine and Baldwin, two of the noblest sons Canada has ever produced. Let the Reformers of to-day, gain inspiration from the life and works of those two great men, who at a critical period of our history, formed a lasting alliance, the essence of which was first, the ultimate triumph of popular government, and second, the recognition to all creeds and races of equal rights and privileges before the law.